



**Assistive Technology Funding Guide
Information Compiled By
The Talking Book Program's
Disability Information & Referral Center
800-252-9605 / www.TexasTalkingBooks.org**

This guide primarily covers general information on and funding for computer technology and equipment. Many of the sources also feature information on and funding for other types of assistive technology (AT) and durable medical equipment (DME). Products and services included within are not part of the Texas Talking Book Program (TBP) or the Disability Information and Referral Center (DIRC), and their listing does not imply endorsement.

I. Sources of Funding:

A. National Funding Sources:

Association of Blind Citizens

atf@blindcitizens.org

www.blindcitizens.org/assistive_tech.htm

The Assistive Technology Fund provides funds to cover fifty percent of the retail price of adaptive devices or software, including digital audio book players. The products covered by this program must retail for a minimum of \$200 and a maximum retail price of \$6,000. Persons eligible to apply for assistance must have a family income of less than \$50,000 and cash assets of less than \$20,000. The organization features two grant periods per year: June and December 31st. Use the form on the website to apply.

CCLVI: Council of Citizens with Low Vision International

Dr. Sam Genensky Video Magnification Award

www.cclvi.org/scholarships/?q=node/4

www.cclvi.org/scholarships/scholarshipMain.html

This organization provides a video magnifier to three individuals in need. In addition to submitting an application, other documentation is required, including, but not limited to, answering three essay questions, providing documentation of visual disability, and submitting a letter of recommendation.

GiveTech

415-750-2570

info@givetech.org

www.givetech.org

Provides input devices for persons with quadriplegia so they are able to use computers.

Internet Essentials Program / Comcast

855-8-INTERNET (846-8376), www.internetessentials.com/

This program offers broadband Internet service for \$9.95 per month, free Internet training, and the opportunity to purchase a low-cost (about \$150) netbook computer. Qualified applicants must live in an area where Comcast is available, and also must have at least one child enrolled in a free school lunch program. Other requirements apply. The program is currently available in 39 states, including Texas.

Kiwanis International

www.kiwanis.org/kiwanis

There are multiple Kiwanis Clubs in every state. They provide assistance to children with disabilities and health conditions.

Lions Clubs Assistance / International Association of Lions Clubs

630-571-5466, www.lionsclubs.org/EN/index.php

Many Lions Clubs provide vocational assistance to persons who are legally blind. The international office refers requests for equipment or other assistance to the appropriate district offices.

Medicaid and Medicare

800-633-4227, www.medicare.gov

**See also the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) listed under “State Funding Sources”

National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

800-825-4595

www.icanconnect.org/

www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/national-deaf-blind-equipment-distribution-program

Provides outreach, assessments, telecommunications technology and training free of charge to those who meet federal eligibility guidelines

Texas Partner:

HandsOn (San Antonio)

210-614-1661

www.icanconnect.org/texas

The Social Security Administration's PASS Program

For people receiving SSI or SSDI

800-772-1213, www.ssa.gov

SSA has ten regional offices and local offices in most major cities in the US. Call the toll free number or visit the website to learn more about the eligibility requirements and benefits for persons who are visually impaired or disabled. Recipients must also have limited financial resources.

United Cerebral Palsy – Bellows Fund:

<http://ucp.org/resources/assistive-technology/the-ucp-elsie-s-bellows-fund/>

Provides financial assistance for the purchase of computer equipment, wheelchairs, lifts, or hearing aids

This assistance is only available through UCP affiliates. Clients registered with the United Cerebral Palsy Association are

recommended by their caseworkers. UCP assists individuals with a variety of disabilities, not just cerebral palsy.

Other Possible Sources of National Funding:

Corporations:

**See “Foundation Center”

Private Health Insurance

Religious affiliations

Wish Fulfillment Groups

B. State Funding Sources:

Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)

512-438-3011, www.dads.state.tx.us

State umbrella agency that offers services for children and adults with mental disabilities, as well as comprehensive services for elderly individuals

Texas operates twenty-eight area Agencies on Aging for information in local areas. To locate one near you visit:

www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/aaa.cfm

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

800-628-5115

DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us

www.dars.state.tx.us

State umbrella organization that offers services for children and adults in four areas:

Division for Blind Services:

www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml

Early Childhood Intervention Services:

www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/index.shtml

Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services: TTY: 512-407-3251

www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/index.shtml

Rehabilitation Services:

www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/index.shtml

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) is a voucher program through DARS that provides financial assistance to Texans with disabilities for the purchase of specialized assistive equipment or services in order to use a telephone. For more information, including a link to the application, visit: www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/stap.shtml

Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

888-963-7111 or 512-776-7111, www.dshs.state.tx.us

State umbrella organization that encompasses the Texas Department of Health and mental health services among other departments.

****See also DSHS Library under “State Sources for Information”**

Discover Technology

713-885-1519, www.discovertechnology.com/

A non-profit organization in the Houston area that distributes donated computer hardware and software to persons who are low income and/or have disabilities

Double Click Program

www.easterseals.com/centraltx/our-programs/adult-services/community-housing-services/double-click-computer.html

A program through Easter Seals that provides opportunities for people with disabilities to purchase reasonably priced refurbished computers. The program is run through the Central Texas Easter Seals office, but anyone with a disability in Texas is eligible to apply.

International Association of Hebrew Free Loans

512- 677-4352 (Austin)

214-696-8008 (Dallas)

817-569-0898 (Fort Worth)

713- 667-9336 ext. 221 (Houston)

210-736-4352 (San Antonio)

administrator@freeloan.org

www.freeloan.org

Offers interest-free loans of up to \$4,000 for worthy purposes, included adaptive computer systems.

School Districts

Contact the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or your local school district for information.

512-463-9734, <http://tea.texas.gov/>

Head and Heart Foundation

Flower Mound, TX

972-539-1906, www.headandheart.org/default.htm

A non-profit organization that provides computer hardware and technical assistance to individuals with severe physical disabilities in the Dallas / Fort Worth area

Tech and Trainers

713-839-7177, www.techsandtrainers.org/

A Houston-based organization that works with local agencies to provide basic computer systems to persons with disabilities

Those in need should contact their social worker or local community organization. Computers are not free, but are low-cost.

Texas Elks Children's Services Inc., www.texaselks.org

The Elks have lodges in many cities in Texas. The Special Grants Program provides funding for assistive devices for eligible children in Texas.

United States Veterans Administration

The VA is a national governmental organization with state and local contacts. You have to be a veteran to be eligible for the services provided.

Texas office: Texas Veterans Commission Headquarters
800-252-VETS (8387) or 512-463-5538, www.tvc.state.tx.us/

II. Sources for Discounted/Used/On-Loan Technology:

A. National Technology Sources:

Different Needz: www.differentneedz.com/

Buy and sell special needs items, including computer equipment, communication devices, and other electronics.

Disabled Dealer: www.disableddealer.com

Disabled Dealer is both an Internet site and a magazine that offers individuals the opportunity to buy and sell new and used adaptive equipment. The magazine does not have a base in Texas, but the web site is accessible to Texans with disabilities.

Gifts in Kind / Good 360

703-836-2121, www.giftsinkind.org

This organization partners with businesses to provide many products and services, including assistive technology, to recipients in need.

Mobility Auction: www.mobilityauction.com/

Allows interested persons to buy and sell equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, accessible vans, and medical supplies.

Muscular Dystrophy Association: www.mdausa.org

Operates local loan closets, by which registered patients may borrow items such as wheelchairs, scooters, communication devices, computers, and lifts.

National Cristina Foundation (NCF)

203-863-9100, www.cristina.org

NCF provides computer technology and solutions to give people with disabilities, students at risk, and the economically disadvantaged the opportunity, through training, to lead more

independent and productive lives. NCF matches the donated computer technology to one or more of its partner organizations in the geographic area where the equipment is located.

More National Sources:

Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation: www.meaf.org/

A small foundation, the mission of the MEA Foundation is to contribute to a better world for us all by helping young people with disabilities, through technology, to maximize their potential and participation in society. Starfish Grants are approved by the Board of Directors, in consultation with experts in the fields of disability and education, to benefit young people with disabilities throughout the country.

B. State Technology Sources:

AGE of Central Texas / Health Equipment Lending Program
512-600-9288, www.ageofcentraltx.org/help.php
Provides DME equipment on loan to Texas residents

Computers for the Blind
214-340-6328
info@computersfortheblind.net
www.computersfortheblind.net

When possible, the organization provides refurbished computers and software, with a \$110 donation for a desktop and \$160 for a laptop, and training for persons with visual impairments.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
800-628-5115
DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us
www.dars.state.tx.us
Division for Blind Services:
www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml

In some cases DARS will assist clients by providing items from a technology loan closet for a trial period of time.

DME Exchange of Dallas

214-997-3639, www.dfwdmeexchange.org/

Collects, restores, and distributes DME equipment to needy individuals in the Dallas area

Drive a Senior – Faith in Action Caregivers:

www.volunteerdriving.com/

Currently nine caregiver groups exist in the Austin area and surrounding communities. These organizations assist the elderly by providing telephone support, transportation to doctor appointments and grocery stores, minor home repairs, and in some cases, medical equipment provided on loan, such as walkers and shower chairs. A list of the groups can be found here: www.volunteerdriving.com/areas-served/

Good Wheelchairs / The Human Potential Center

512-420-8005, www.goodwheelchairs.org

Offers low cost, gently used wheelchairs, power chairs, and scooters. Serves the Central Texas area, Dallas, Waco, and possibly other areas

Goodwill Computer Works

512-637-7100, www.goodwillcentraltexas.org/shop

Goodwill accepts donations of computers to be used in a training program for job skills in computers and computer repair. The computers are sold at discounted prices at the Goodwill Store.

Rainbow Senior Health Center

Home Health Closet

830-249-2114, www.rainbowseniorcenter.com/home-health-closet/

Provides DME equipment, and wheelchairs and scooters on a limited basis, on loan to individuals in the Boerne area

RESNA AT Device Reuse Programs (State)

Three currently:

Children's Special Needs Network

Belton, TX

254-933-7597, 254-933-7213, or 800-600-3940

csnn@special-children.org

www.special-children.org

Serves children and adults from across the state

Medical Equipment Network for those w/Disabilities
(MEND)

San Antonio, TX

210-223-6363 or 888-903-6363

www.projectmend.org/

Provides donated DME (durable medical equipment)

Items are repaired, refurbished, and sanitized.

Also provides \$500 loans for assistive devices for
veterans

Reach of Denton Resource Center on Independent Living
Denton, TX

940-383-1062

www.reachcils.org/locations/denton

Loans mobility and vision-related equipment

NOTE: Currently, the state of Texas does not participate in
RESNA Device Loan Programs, or State Financing Programs.

Texas Technology Access Project (TTAP)

512-232-0740 or 800-828-7839

<http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/loan.php>

TTAP has an assistive technology device loan program designed to
meet the needs of persons not served by existing agency loan
programs. This program will allow persons with disabilities, their

families, educators, service providers and employers to borrow AT devices for six weeks and may be renewed if the device has not been requested by another borrower. This service is free and is available to anyone in Texas that meets the qualifications.

****Please refer to pages 17-18 for more information.**

III. Sources for Information (On AT and/or on Funding):

A. National Information Sources:

Ability Hub: <http://abilityhub.org/>

This website will direct the user to sources of adaptive computer equipment and alternative methods available for accessing computers.

ABLEDATA

800-227-0216

abledata@neweditions.net

www.abledata.com

Provides computerized searches for assistive devices, products and equipment

Searches include distributor information and product descriptions. Fact sheets and information on catalogs are also available. The database can be searched from the ABLEDATA web site.

Accessible Technology Coalition

<http://atcoalition.org/>

A part of the Center for Accessible Technology, which is based in California, the AT Coalition is an online AT resource. With a free membership, individuals can attend free webinars, ask experts questions by email, and have access to an online AT database.

AFB TECH: A Division of the American Foundation for the Blind

www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/technology-evaluation/12

Product search: www.afb.org/prodMain.asp

Product Evaluations: AccessWorld: www.afb.org/aw/main.asp

In addition, explanations of and sources for specific assistive technology are available on the main website for the American Foundation for the Blind.

Alliance for Technology Access (The) (ATA)

800-914-3017

atainfo@ataccess.org

www.ataccess.org

Since 1987, the Alliance for Technology Access (ATA) has worked nationwide to bring technology into the lives of children and adults with disabilities. The Alliance is a nationwide network of assistive technology resource centers, individuals, organizations and vendors. Unfortunately, there is no ATA Center in Texas at this time. However, the national office and the website both provide valuable information.

Apple – Special Needs

877-204-3930

accessibility@apple.com

www.apple.com/accessibility

Outlines the accessibility features that are offered in the Mac operating system

Sections are provided for vision, hearing, physical/motor, literacy/learning, and language and communication information.

Blind Bargains: www.blindbargains.com

Information on good deals on the Internet for a variety of products for the blind, including technology

The Center for Assistive Technology & Environmental Access (CATEA) / Georgia Institute of Technology

404-894-4960, www.catea.gatech.edu/

Source for information pertaining to disability and computer access

Provides technology related services to persons with disabilities and distributes information packets upon request. Web site contains product and manufacturer information and Internet links.

Center on Technology and Disability

202-884-8588

www.ctdinstitute.org/

“The Institute [online] comprises a Library of multi-media, multi-lingual resources; a Café that offers both topical and audience-specific discussions; and a Learning Center that makes available leading experts in the field.”

Closing the Gap

507-248-3294, www.closingthegap.com

Provides information relating to computer technology, special education, and rehabilitation

Web site features a Resource Guide, which is also published in the February/March issue of the *Closing the Gap* newspaper. The issue may be purchased separately, or as part of a subscription.

Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (ECTAS)

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

919-962-2001

ectacenter@unc.edu

<http://ectacenter.org/>

Provides information on Early Intervention Programs (from birth to age 5), and who to contact in your state for more information.

Family Center on Technology and Disability (FCTD)

Academy for Educational Development (AED)

202-884-8068

fctd@fhi360.org

www.fctd.info/

Assists organizations and programs that serve families of children with disabilities by providing information and support on accessing and using assistive technology

Features many resources related to assistive technology and funding.

Flaghouse – Giant Leaps

www.flaghouse.com/Special-Needs-grantWriting.asp

Free assistance with grant writing, and information about various grants related to assistive technology.

Foundation Center (The)

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/topical/disabilities.html>

Operates five regional libraries

Maintains a comprehensive database on foundation and corporate giving programs for both individuals and organizations

Publishes directories and guides and assists with grant application procedures. The website offers a section for persons with disabilities, which features website accessibility information as well as general and funding resources specifically for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities who cannot access their regional libraries are also provided with the opportunity for a books-by-mail loan program.

Microsoft Accessibility Technology for Everyone

www.microsoft.com/enable

A comprehensive site for information regarding Microsoft's emphasis on accessibility

Sections include step-by-step tutorials, guides by impairment, products and support, and free subscriptions of the Accessibility Update e-newsletter.

National Federation of the Blind

410-659-9314, <https://nfb.org/technology-center>

Provides information and answers questions concerning adaptive equipment and assistive technology. Website features lists of sources for specific kinds of technology as well as advice on what to purchase. The International Braille and Technology Center, part of NFB, maintains a telephone hotline to answer questions regarding technology.

National Pass It On Center: <http://passitoncenter.org>

Provides information on local reuse centers throughout the country
Both assistive technology and durable medical equipment sources are included.

National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)

800-346-2742

naricinfo@heitechservices.com

www.naric.com

Provides access to resources for employment, advocacy, benefits and financial assistance, education, technology, and more

PACER Center

Simon Technology Center

www.pacer.org/publications/stc.asp

Free and for cost brochures, handouts, and presentations regarding assistive technology

Prentke Romich: <https://eval.prentrom.com/access/login>

Information on funding for communication devices

Rehab Tool: www.rehabtool.com/at.html

Offers information on assistive technology, and provides a library of links.

RESNA Technical Assistance Project

703-524-6686, www.resna.org/

Administers the state assistive technology projects that provide assistive technology-related services

Services can include information and referrals, demonstration and training, and guidance in obtaining funding.

****See also Texas Technology Access Project.**

Tech Soup:

www.techsoup.org

Information on assistive technology, plus a blog and a resource for donating used technology.

Tech Matrix:

www.techmatrix.org/

Online search tool to find products, either by subject, or by learning support.

Trace Research and Development Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison

608-262-6966

info@trace.wisc.edu

<http://trace.wisc.edu>

Features sections for information on disabilities, assistive technology, government regulations, universal design, and web accessibility

B. State Information Sources:

Ability Connection Texas – UCP Dallas

214-247-4539, www.abilityconnectiontexas.org/at_rltt.php

The Removing Limits through Technology Program is an official demonstration site for the [Texas Technology Access Program](#) administered by the University of Texas at Austin. As an official demonstration site, anyone can receive a free demonstration of the latest in technology for individuals with all types of disabilities.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Audiovisual Library

888-963-7111 or 512-458-7111

www.dshs.state.tx.us/avlib/ecirehab.shtm

Maintains a library of books and videos on disability and health and related topics. Also features information on grant resources in Texas.

Easter Seals: www.easterseals.com/connect-locally/?state=TX

Six local offices for Easter Seals operate in Texas. Staff assists in locating both assistive technology and available funding sources.

Easter Seals Greater Houston

<http://bridgingapps.org/assistive-technology-evaluations/>

Three locations in the Houston and surrounding areas provide demonstrations of technology as well as workshops and trainings. In addition, technology and communication evaluations are offered for a fee. Each location offers open lab days, but the evaluations are by appointment only.

Houston (Bellaire): 713-838-9050

The Woodlands: 281-705-9850

Stafford: 713-838-9050

Northwest Hills Eye Care

512-328-0555, www.nwhillseyecare.com/

Northwest Hills Eye Care features a store that sells independent living aids, reading machines, magnifiers, and lighting devices.

Texas Technology Access Project / University of Texas at Austin

512-232-0740 or 800-828-7839, techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/

The purpose of TTAP is to establish a statewide, comprehensive, and consumer-responsive system for the provision of technology-related assistance to Texas citizens of all ages with disabilities. They offer short and long term device loans, and partner with other disability-related organizations to provide computer and AT demonstrations.

List of demonstration sites:

<http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/demo3.html>

Partners include United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Texas and Independent Living Centers.

****See also RESNA.**

IV. Specific Programs to Provide Technology:

A. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part B:

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is required for every student with a disability in every school in this country. If the IEP states that the child must have assistive technology in order to be in school, then the school is obligated to provide that assistive technology at no cost to the child or his/her family.

****Contact local districts or TEA for more information on IDEA Part B. For information on IDEA Part C, contact Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) through DARS.**

B. The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992:

An Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) must include a need for assistive technology for the adult with a disability who is seeking vocational rehabilitation in order to prepare for employment. This includes adults who have been unable to maintain employment, adults who are preparing to enter the workforce for the first time, and graduating students who are transitioning from a school environment to a work environment.

****Contact the Rehabilitation Services under DARS for more information on assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation.**

C. Other Programs in Texas:

For Children:

- Children with Special Health Care Needs
- Medically Dependent Children's Program
- Program for Amplification for Children of Texas (PACT) (audiology)
- Texas Health Steps

For Adults (ages 21 and over):

- Community Based Alternatives Waiver (CBA)

For Texans for All Ages:

- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)
- Home and Community Services Waiver (HCS)
- In-Home and Family Support
- Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program

NOTE: These programs operate within various agencies in the Texas Health and Human Services system. Please contact the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) for information and eligibility requirements.

V. Tips:

A. Become very knowledgeable about the person's disability, needs, and capabilities. State in writing what purpose the equipment will be used for, such as for school or for work. Many sources of funding require justification statements as part of the application process.

B. Keep updated records of the following information. Most funding sources will ask for some or all of this data, and some sources define their parameters by topics such as family gross income or employment history.

Primary Disability

Time of Onset

Cause of Disability

Secondary Disability

Time of Onset of Secondary Disability

Cause of Secondary Disability

Employment History

Family Gross Income

Monthly Expenses (rent or mortgage payments, utilities, outstanding loans and bills, medical expenses, etc.)

Health Insurance Information

Names, Ages, and Relationship of Dependents

C. Research assistive technology devices, and become very familiar with what is available to meet the individual's needs. Contact persons and organizations in Section III of this packet for more information, as well as the individuals outlined below.

D. Obtain professional assistance with the evaluation and device selection process. Some examples of professionals that can provide assistance:

Educator

Rehabilitation Counselor

Therapist

Physician

E. Network and talk to people that have similar devices and find out how funding was obtained. This can be accomplished by contacting:

Disability Organizations

Parent Groups

Support Groups

Advocacy Groups

Educators

F. When the right equipment is located, gather all the information possible about it. Obtain brochures, analyze various prices, locate product reviews, even take pictures or video of the person using the technology, to emphasize its need and value to that individual.

G. Develop and prioritize a list of possible funding sources. Remember that certain sources cater to specific populations, such as the Veterans Administration. However, also keep in mind that in

some cases more than one funding source can be used to purchase a piece of equipment.

H. Learn the requirements and application process for the funding source or sources. Be certain that the person meets ALL of the qualifications before he/she applies, and make sure that all of the necessary documentation, including accompanying papers, prescriptions, recommendations, etc, is given at the time the application is processed. When possible, present the information in person, and request that the packet be checked in order to be certain that all of the required materials have been included. Applications can be denied for something as simple as forgetting a signature.

I. Useful Terminology for Funding Requests:

1. FOR Medicare:

- Medically necessary
- Reasonable and necessary
- Durable medical equipment
- Prosthetic device

2. FOR Medicaid:

- Achieving and maintaining self-support to prevent, reduce or eliminate dependency
- Self-sufficiency
- Preserving, rehabilitating, or reuniting families
- Health-related
- Prosthetic appliance
- Physician-prescribed equipment part of client's medical treatment plan
- Restoration of the patient to his best functional level

3. FOR “Crippled” Children's Services:

- Frequently pay cost of whatever health care is indicated

4. FOR Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

- Services, training, and equipment used to enhance the employability of disabled individuals
- Vocational potential
- Independent living status
- Eligibility for vocational rehabilitation based on:
 - A. Presence of physical or mental disability which results in substantial handicap to employment.
 - B. Reasonable expectations that vocational rehabilitation services may benefit an individual's employability or independent living status.

J. Call regularly to check on the process, and keep a record of all phone calls and correspondence. Be persistent!

K. If the person is denied, begin the appeal process immediately. If the individual cannot afford an attorney, contact the local Legal Aid Society.

VI. Books Available on Loan from the DIRC:

Assistive Technologies in the Library

Assistive Technology for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Guide to Assessment

Assistive Technology in the Classroom: Enhancing the School Experiences of Students with Disabilities

Guide to Easier Living with Technology

*Illustrated Guide to Assistive Technology and Devices: Tools and
Gadgets for Living Independently*

VII. Related DIRC Fact Sheets:

AT & Computer Trainings / Tutorials

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tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov / www.texastalkingbooks.org